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10/17/84

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PROG 10717784

AMB: FVORTIZ

POL: JJCARRAGHER: MH

1.DCM: JABUSHNELL, 2.POL: RBHOWARD, 3.POL: JJDEVINE

AMB DCM POL-3, DAO ECON SCI, USIS MILGP RF, CHRON

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN

USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

USAFSO HOWARD AFB PN//LAI//

READINESS COMMAND MCDILL FLA

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date ☐ Declassify on ☐ Reason

CINCSO FOR INTAFF

CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PGOV, MARR, MASS, AR

SUBJECT: INCREASING RESISTANCE TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES***

- AMONG SOME MILITARY?***

REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 8301 (DTG 171506Z OCT 84),***

- (B) USCINCREC MACDI 121655Z OCT 84,***

- (C) BUENOS AIRES 7788 (DTG 281813Z SEP 84)***

SUBJECT: BORRAS SAYS MINORITY SECTORS OF MILITARY OPPOSED

- ADVENT OF DEMOCRACY; PERONIST/MILITARY

- CONTACTS; AMNESTY TALKS CONTINUE

REFS: (A) BUENOS AIRES 8301 (DTG 171506Z OCT 84),

- (B) USCINCREC MACDI 121655Z OCT 84,

- (C) BUENOS AIRES 7788 (DTG 281813Z SEP 84)

4.DAO: LCCONWELL, 5.MILGP: MLOPEZ

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[REDACTED]

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: SOME RECENT EVENTS SUGGEST MILITARY CONFIDENCE AND ASSERTIVENESS ARE REBOUNDED FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE LAST TWO YEARS. ALTHOUGH HIGHEST-LEVEL ARMED FORCES AUTHORITIES REITERATE THE FORCES ARE SUBORDINATE TO THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT, LEGAL AND ILLEGAL RESISTANCE BY SOME ACTIVE AND RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITY MAY BE INCREASING. MINISTER OF DEFENSE BORRAS NOTED THAT "MINORITY SECTORS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES" OPPOSED "THE ADVENT OF DEMOCRACY" IN ARGENTINA. UNKNOWN PERSONS STOLE DOCUMENTS RELATING TO HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS IN ROSARIO. A NUMBER OF UNIFORMED OFFICERS RECENTLY ATTENDED A MASS FOR THOSE KILLED BY SUBVERSIVES. RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS WITHIN PERONISM CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE MILITARY TIES. IN A FURTHER ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE MILITARY, CARDINAL'S HOMILY AT THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS INCLUDED A VEILED CALL FOR AMNESTY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE CHIEF OF THE ARGENTINE JOINT STAFF, LIEUTENANT GENERAL JULIO FERNANDEZ TORRES, RETURNED FROM HIS VISIT TO READINESS COMMAND TO GIVE ANOTHER STRONG DECLARATION OF MILITARY RESPECT FOR POLITICAL AUTHORITY, SAYING "IT IS WRITTEN IN THE ARMED FORCES BLOOD" THAT THEY ARE SUBORDINATE TO ELECTED CIVILIAN OFFICIALS (REF A). IN A COMMENT PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE'S DETERMINATION TO ESTABLISH CLEAR LINES OF COMMAND WITH CIVILIANS AT THE APEX, GENERAL FERNANDEZ TORRES SAID "THE INVITATION EXTENDED TO ME WAS MADE THROUGH PROPER CHANNELS OF POLITICAL POWER."

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3. [REDACTED] OTHER RECENT EVENTS SUGGEST THAT FERNANDEZ TORRES' SENTIMENTS ARE NOT UNIVERSALLY SHARED. WITHIN** THE MILITARY.** IN ROSARIO, UNKNOWN ARMED PERSONS WEARING POLICE UNIFORMS BROKE INTO ROSARIO COURT, OVERPOWERED GUARDS, AND SPIRITED AWAY DOCUMENTS RELATING TO INVESTIGATIONS INTO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. ALTHOUGH THE DOCUMENTS WERE LATER ANONYMOUSLY RETURNED, THE ROBBERY, AND THE RECENT HISTORY IT RECALLED, PROVOKED SHARP REACTIONS FROM PRESIDENT ALFONSIN AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE BORRAS. ALFONSIN LAID THE DEED TO "THOSE NOSTALGIC FOR VIOLENCE." BORRAS SAID "MINORITY SECTORS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES" OPPOSED "THE ADVENT OF DEMOCRACY" IN ARGENTINA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ALFONSIN'S ANGER MAY HAVE INSTIGATED SOME BEHIND-THE-SCENES GOA ACTION WHICH RESULTED IN THE RETURN OF THE DOCUMENTS.

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4. (U) SOME RETIRED MILITARY ALSO APPEAR INCREASINGLY WILLING TO JUSTIFY AND IDENTIFY WITH ITS WAR ON SUBVERSION DURING THE PROCESS GOVERNMENTS. THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE ARMED FORCES STATEMENT FINDING NO FAULT WITH ANTI-SUBVERSIVE ORDERS ISSUED BY THE JUNTAS IS THE MOST OBVIOUS EXAMPLE (REF C). GENERAL JORGE RAFAEL VIDELA. WHOAAFEWMMMONTHSAAGO** SEEMED RESOLVED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY AND JUDGMENT*** FORRACTIONSSHEETOOKKASSPRESIDENT**SOUGHT OCTOBER 15 TO HAVE HIS TRIAL RETURNED TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL, ARGUING THAT "THE IMPLACABLE ENEMY" HIS GOVERNMENT DEFEATED IS NOW "TRYING TO DEMEAN THE VICTORS." ON OCTOBER 16 VIDELA SAID HE WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN HIS CIVIL COURT TRIAL.

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5. (U) IN ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION OF ASSERTIVENESS, ON THE SAME DAY THE SUPREME COUNCIL ISSUED ITS REPORT, AN ESTIMATED 700 PEOPLE, INCLUDING EX-PRESIDENT REYNALDO BIGNONE, ATTENDED THE MONTHLY MASS ORGANIZED BY A GROUP CALLED "RELATIVES OF PERSONS KILLED BY SUBVERSION." AT LEAST THREE ARMY COLONELS AND SEVERAL LIEUTENANT COLONELS REPORTEDLY ATTENDED THE MASS IN UNIFORM. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MASS, THE NATIONAL ANTHEM WAS SUNG, FOLLOWED BY CHEERS OF "LONG LIVE OUR GLORIOUS ARMED FORCES."

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6. [REDACTED] SOME EMBASSY CONTACTS, PARTICULARLY MODERATE PERONISTS, WARN US THAT RIGHT-WING ELEMENTS WITHIN PERONISM CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE MILITARY TIES. THE NAME MOST PROMINENTLY MENTIONED IN THESE CONTACTS IS HERMINIO IGLESIAS, THE PERONIST CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE IN LAST YEAR'S ELECTIONS, WHOSE DEMAGOGUERY IN THE CAMPAIGN APPARENTLY DROVE MANY VOTERS INTO THE ALFONSIN RANKS. CONSERVATIVE** PERONIST LUIS SOBRINA ARANDA IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF*** PROMINENT PERONISTS ALSO WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE*** CLOSE MILITARY TIES DATING FROM THE PROCESS PERIOD.*** IGLESIAS, WHOSE ENTRENCHED STRENGTH IN BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE HAS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO PERONIST DIVISIONS AND HURT THE PARTY'S PUBLIC IMAGE, ALSO CONTINUES HIS POLITICAL ACTIVISM, CURRENTLY SEEKING AN ELECTORAL FRONT WITH EX-PRESIDENT FRONDISI AND HIS SMALL MOVIMIENTO DE INTEGRACION Y DESAROLLO (MID) PARTY.

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7. (U) TALK OF AN EVENTUAL AMNESTY, WHICH WOULD BENEFIT SOME ACTIVE AND RETIRED MILITARY, CONTINUES. PROponents ARGUE THAT AMNESTY IS THE BEST WAY TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND AND TO REINTEGRATE THE ARMED FORCES INTO ARGENTINE SOCIETY. THE LATEST ADVOCATE APPARENTLY IS RAUL CARDINAL PRIMATESTA, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CORDOBA. SPEAKING AT THE THREE-DAY EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS HELD THIS PAST WEEKEND, CARDINAL PRIMATESTA REPORTEDLY ASKED IF IT WAS NOT TIME TO "REQUEST AND GRANT FORGIVENESS" OVER THE VIOLENCE OF THE 1970S IN ARGENTINA.

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8. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE ROSARIO ROBBERY SPARKED WIDE CONCERN, PERHAPS DRIVING HOME TO THE PUBLIC WHAT BORRAS, PARTICULARLY, HAS SAID ALL ALONG AND REPEATED OCTOBER 12--THAT DEMOCRACY IS NOT A MIRACLE WHICH WILL IMMEDIATELY SWEEP AWAY THE SPECTRE OF ARGENTINA'S RECENT PAST. NOTHING CURRENTLY SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT DISSIDENT MILITARY ARE DOING ANYMORE THAN DEMONSTRATING GREATER CONFIDENCE AND PUBLICLY SHEDDING THE DEFENSIVE SILENCE INTO WHICH THE FORCES RETREATED DURING THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY.

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9. PUBLIC REFERENCES TO A POSSIBLE AMNESTY REMAIN RELATIVELY INFREQUENT, BUT IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICIALS A WIDE RANGE OF CONTACTS, INCLUDING MODERATE RADICALS, REGARD IT AS AN UNDESIRABLE BUT PERHAPS NECESSARY SOLUTION TO THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. NO ONE SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT AN AMNESTY SHOULD INCLUDE JUNTA LEADERS. INDEED, AMNESTY IS UNLIKELY EVEN TO BE CONSIDERED SERIOUSLY UNTIL AFTER JUNTA MEMBERS ARE JUDGED, A PROCESS WHICH IRONICALLY MAY TAKE EVEN LONGER NOW THAT THE CASES REST WITH CIVIL RATHER THAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

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10. [REDACTED] GENERAL FERNANDEZ TORRES' STATEMENT THAT HIS INVITATION TO READINESS COMMAND CAME THROUGH CIVILIAN POLITICAL AUTHORITIES ILLUSTRATES THE IMPORTANCE IN ARGENTINA OF SYMBOLS AND PROPER USE OF CHANNELS. IT SHOWS AGAIN THAT, ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES TIME-CONSUMING AND INVOLVED, OUR EFFORTS TO ASSIST MOD BY INSISTING THAT CIVILIAN CHANNELS BE THE INSTRUMENT FOR DEFENSE-RELATED GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS ARE PAYING BENEFITS. END COMMENT. ORTIZ##

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